

Dear SAGE members,

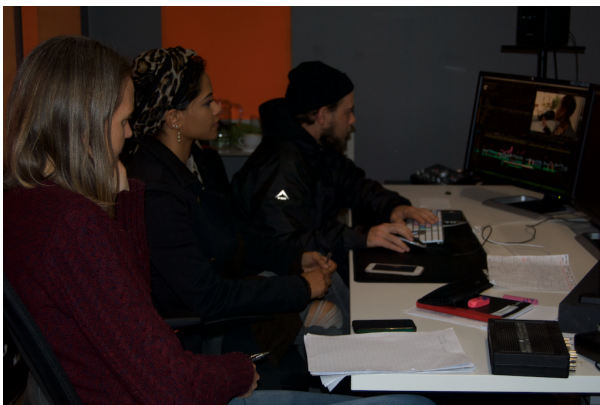
Rough Cut Lab 2017

This year, in collaboration with [Encounters Documentary Festival](#) and [The Refinery](#) Cape Town, SAGE launched the first South African Rough Cut Lab for documentary films. Three films were selected, and three mentors from SAGE, Andrea Shaw, Ronelle Loots and Tanja Hagen, gave input on how to improve the films. The Lab took place from 5 to 7 June in Cape Town and was a great success. The Refinery generously sponsored post-production prizes for each team and SAGE rewarded the editors with copies of [The Art of the Cut](#) by Greg Keast. Below is more information about the participants and their impressions of this invaluable experience.



Last day of the Lab

Not in my neighbourhood



Andrea Shaw, Raisa Cole and Chris Kets hard at work

Co-Producer and Researcher: Raisa Cole

Raisa Cole is an urban development and sustainable livelihoods professional with six years of experience working with communities, governments and civil society actors in communicating development trends, climate change adaptation and community driven development. Her professional and academic career is driven by the need for adaptable and resilient human settlements. She has worked for various international organisations including the United Nations World Food Programme, The GIZ,

Solidaridad SAF and African Union. Raisa holds an MSc degree in International Relations and Urban Development from the Technical University of Darmstadt-Germany, an MSc degree in housing and urban planning from the University of Pierre Mendes-France and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Cape Town.

What is your documentary about, and why did you decide to submit it to the Rough Cut Lab?

The documentary is about the intergenerational struggle against architectural apartheid, displacement, gentrification and other forms of spatial violence. The three cities we focus on, New York, São Paulo and Cape Town, can all be classified as Global Cities and therefore important players in the global economy. As cities around the world catapult themselves into "World Class", Global City status, we have to ask ourselves, "at what cost"? The documentary Not in my Neighbourhood gives the account of characters from three, seemingly World Class Cities. It follows their daily struggles, trials and triumphant moments, as they try to shape the cities they live in, from the bottom up!

The creators of this film have all been subject to various forms of spatial violence. The story is very personal to us, a passion that was translated into the production process. However, this also has its downfalls. Because we were so personally linked to our character's stories, we sometimes struggled to let go of repetitive or redundant content. We wanted the lab editors to help us communicate our message in a more effective way, while staying true to the advocacy, educational and solidarity building objectives of the film.

How do you regard the role of the editor in a production?

We viewed the role of our editor as fulfilling two key functions. Firstly, as a content coordinator, our editor filtered, organised and drew links between the existing footage. Secondly, the editor played a key facilitative role in making sure the message of the film was communicated in an effective and creative way. This required a deep understanding of the objectives of the film and the ways in which each piece of footage, each character and soundscape contributed to achieving those objectives.

Editor: Chris Kets

Chris Kets is a filmmaker from Cape Town, focused on creating new media for and by the youth of South Africa. Having studied fictional and documentary film at AFDA and Big Fish respectively Chris tries to find the magical elements in real life stories. Enveloping himself in the new movement of young South African artists and subcultures. Chris hopes to create a new identity for the post "Rainbow Nation" South Africa that is not dictated to us but created by us. In a world where international borders are being broken down by the Internet, Chris is pushing to create visual content that can connect and push the scene worldwide.

How would you describe the role of a documentary editor?

The role of a documentary editor is to piece together an emotional, narrative story

out of pieces or fragments of time and in the case of our film to also give information to the audience that can be used as a tool of activism or social change.

What were the challenges you encountered when editing the documentary?

The challenge we face is the immense amount of information we have investigating a complex and loaded subject matter from three different countries. The challenge we also face is to create a beautiful emotional story whilst still giving enough information to the audience so that the massive amount of work our director did in researching and collecting information on the issues at hand can be used as a tool for activism whilst still telling the raw, honest stories and everyday lives of our character's struggles.

What suggestions did your mentor make to improve the edit?

Our mentor Andrea Shaw with her years of experience suggested the 82 minute time-frame with an 8 sequence structure. In this way we were able to create a structure with a strong, followable argument that still keeps the emotional integrity of the story. We analysed and went through the current film in order to compress and extract the best moments of the film.

When do you think it is important to have a mentor involved?

I think before your last big structural change in a full-length documentary it is important to have input of a mentor as it is a time when you need to clarify the flow of your story and see how your story can be strengthened. What needs more and what needs less from someone who hasn't been involved in the project for that long can give a more "objective" look at the film and give you an idea about how the audience will receive the film.

What value did the Rough Cut Lab process add to your project?

The Rough Cut Lab process really opened up our eyes to the many elements of post-production that one must consider when 'finishing' a film. The valuable insight from the experienced editors was an opportunity that gave us clarity on moving forward. The award of being given time for a sound mix in the amazing facilities of The Refinery is also such a valuable process that I think many of us forget in the process of making documentaries that will really help bring the project onto a higher level. I am very grateful for the chance to be involved in this project and think it has a lot of potential in bringing up the quality of South African Documentary as Post-Production is often an overlooked craft.

Mentor: Andrea Shaw S.A.G.E.



Andrea studied Drama and English at UCT in the early 90s, and then learned editing

on-the-job in a newsroom in London. Since then, working in Johannesburg and Cape Town, she has edited and scripted across most genres, with a strong focus on storytelling through documentary. She works with filmmakers, academics and journalists on socio-political documentaries; on adventure series and unscripted reality for broadcast; and most recently on feature drama. She is married to an editor and their constant tech talk drives the children crazy.

How would you describe the role of an editor?

The editor's role varies greatly across the genres – in unscripted reality, for example, you are the director, writer and editor rolled into one; whereas in drama you are Frankenstein to a story dreamed up in another person's head. You are always the first audience, though, so I consistently make notes of my gut reaction when I watch rushes.

What are the challenges documentary editing face?

Documentaries don't make money, but take the longest to film, with the biggest shooting ratio. In order to find the story in the material, the editor needs time with the material. You have to experiment and find your way, and it is very difficult to secure funding in a market flooded with interesting films by first-time filmmakers who don't care if they get paid. As they say: Fast, good or cheap. Pick two.

Why do you think mentorship is important?

In South Africa, mentoring and apprenticeships happen as standard practice with crew on film sets. Decades of knowledge learned through experience working with local and international productions is passed on and shared. What you can learn from a professional in an industry is very different to what you can learn from a film school. In editing, for example, the nitty gritty of studio's politics, current workflows (which change constantly), and how to deal with dozens of unique problems can only be learned the hard way, or through panicked phone-calls or mentorship. If we don't share our learned experience, we are doing our industry and its reputation a disservice.

How did you experience the Rough Cut Lab process?

The Rough Cut Lab was an inspiring experience, bringing together filmmakers and editors with the common goal of creating exciting, impactful stories, but all with very different styles and approaches. It was a great learning experience for everyone, good for networking, and reminding all the lonely editors that we are actually part of an energetic industry.

Standing on their shoulders

Producer: Xoliswa Sithole

Xoliswa Sithole is a producer and director who makes films mainly about women and children focusing on justice, human rights and poverty. She started out her film career as an actress in anti-apartheid films like Cry Freedom and Mandela and then moved into. In 2001 she produced a documentary called Shouting Silent. Other

documentaries include South Africa's Lost Girls, Zimbabwe's Forgotten Children, Orphans of Inkandla and Child of the Revolution.

As a member of BAFTA, the British Academy for Film and Television, Xoliswa acted as a juror three times. She has also been nominated three times for a BAFTA award, and won twice. She won a Peabody award for Zimbabwe's Forgotten Children.

What is your documentary about?

Standing on their Shoulders (working title) is a documentary of how the success of the 1956 Women's March changed the political and gender dynamics in our Struggle landscape and created a gender movement that evolved and took us to where we are constitutionally today. It chronicles the domino effect of the Women's March and how that created a space for women in South Africa to continue protesting.

How do you regard the role of the editor in a production?

The editor is an ear and an eye for the director - it's a gift for someone to put something together an editor is priceless.

Do you think mentorship is important during post-production?

Mentorship is very, very important. I was so blessed to be mentored for this particular project It helped changed my film for the better and I felt I learnt something new everyday.

What value did the Rough Cut Lab process add to your project?

The Lab added a lot of value to the project - we had editors who were very experienced and very patient and to my mind the experience I got was priceless and I feel like I have gained mentors for life as well. It expanded my horizon. I think the project should be longer than three days. I was humbled and felt very blessed and it brought me to the basics I learnt a lot.

Editor: Tshililo waha Muzila



Tshililo waha Muzila has worked in the television for over 10 years as a DOP, Director, Post-Production Supervisor and Editor on local and international productions. He started his own production company in 2008 and has produced self-funded films and TV pilot projects. He has also proven managerial skills and has been involved in training and mentoring graduates and placing them into the industry.

His documentary work includes My World, Homesick (Hong Kong), Heartiness (Ghana), Standing on their Shoulders, Our Moments, Musangwe, Freedom is not Free and many more. He has also worked on reality programmes like Clash of the Choirs, Tropika Island of Treasure (Mexico and Thailand), The Kids Are Alright and

Laugh Out Loud, as well as shows such as The Perfect Sishebo Show, Cooking with Azania and Come Again, a prime time travelogue show on its 3rd series produced for SABC 1. He is also the director of 100% Youth, a SAFTA Award Winner under the Best Youth Programme category.

How would you describe the role of a documentary editor?

A Documentary Editor is a storyteller, a visual scriptwriter and above all not just a mechanic, but a therapist to the film director and their characters.

What were the challenges you encountered when editing the documentary?

I had a lot of technical challenges related more on media management, working with different footage material and amateur archives shot by everyday people as they document their own history. Also, lack of historical archive was a major obstacle, making it almost impossible to make this spectacular documentary breathe and visually appealing.

What suggestions did your mentor make to improve the edit?

Re-looking the way in which we can tell the story to capture the audience from the very beginning was a major key-point and eye-opener on.

When do you think it is important to have a mentor involved?

Having someone to look at your project opens up an opportunity to rethink about the structural breakdown of the film. It also helps in confronting the fears of dismantling that Sequence and a feeling of having a second brain who is not only looking at the story but the technical aspect and possibilities of enhancing the film is a plus.

What value did the Rough Cut Lab process add to your project?

As an editor, sometimes it is very frustrating telling stories in solitary with the director, and we rarely find moments to reimagine or rethink our very own storytelling techniques to such an extent that we get swallowed in our sometimes not open-minded imaginations. This Lab is a must and I would strongly advise editors not only to open up a forum but keeping it active at all times. Working with directors, and expertise and hardships, this Lab is such a major stepping stone in telling our own capturing and amazing stories.

Mentor: Tanja Hagen S.A.G.E.

Tanja Hagen is an accomplished Film and TV editor, specialising in the Narrative genre. Her feature films include She is King, Paradise Stop, La Bohème, Breathe Umphefumlo and White Wedding. She worked on popular local series like 90 Plein Street, Jacob's Cross, The Lab and Gaz'lam, as well as on the CBeebies-BBC series Jamillah and Aladdin. Her documentary credits include the Origins series for Nat Geo, Between Life & Death for Al Jazeera English and I Am Woman: Leap of Faith. She is based in Cape Town.



Tanja Hagen and Xoliswa Sithole

The Sound of Masks



Ronelle Loots, Sara Gouveia and Khalid Shamis hard at work

Producer: Sara Gouveia

Sara Gouveia is an award winning filmmaker and photographer. Her documentary *Mama Goema* won the audience award for Best SA Documentary at the TriContinental Film Festival 2011 and screened at festivals worldwide. Sara has worked as a writer, director and cinematographer in commercials, online campaigns and short documentaries for various clients and has created a number of music videos.

In 2016, Sara directed the short documentary *NGIYAPHILA: Spirituality and Sexuality for Steps for the Future* as well as the short films *Lonmin: Put Your House In Order* and *Hunted for their Body Parts* for Amnesty International, which was part of their most successful campaign for that year.

Sara is interested in exploring the line where the imaginary and the real touch, the space between our conscious and subconscious and this can be seen in both her fictional as well as documentary work. She also uses the body as a form of expression, as a storyteller, and has developed projects with several dancers over the years, namely Joana Bergano, with whom she made the experimental film *Scarlet Days*, winner of the Jury Prize for Best Film in the video dance competition at the 5th InShadow Festival 2013, and she has been working with the group of

Mozambican Mapiko dancers “Massacre de Mueda” represented in her documentary *The Sound of Masks* since 2013.

What is your documentary about, and why did you decide to submit it to the Rough Cut Lab?

The Sound of Masks interweaves the politics of Mozambique's colonial past and its present through the lens of magical realism. Atanásio Nhussi, a compelling storyteller and legendary Mapiko dancer, takes us on a visually dramatic journey, blurring the lines between the real and the imaginary.

The reason behind submitting the film to the Rough Cut Lab was because we were sitting on a 75 minute rough cut and we felt the need to find a more balanced way to blend the different elements: observational sequences, archive material, dance sequences and theatrical scenes. Exchanging ideas with other editors sounded like a great opportunity to explore different possibilities in the edit.

How do you regard the role of the editor in a production?

I think the editor has a fundamental role in a film, especially in these long terms documentary projects, where we often end up with a many hours of footage and it's easy to start losing focus. The editor can look at the footage with fresh eyes and help the director shape the film.

Do you think mentorship is important during post-production?

I think mentorship is very important during post-production. The editor can look at the footage with fresh eyes, but after a few weeks in edit he/she will be familiar with all the material and themes, so both the director and the editor become too close to the footage and it's easy to start losing perspective. Bringing in other people to look at the cut means having new eyes and ideas that can help create a stronger cut.

What value did the Rough Cut Lab process add to your project?

I really enjoyed working with Ronelle Loots, because not only is she a great editor, but she is amazing at thinking about the role of sound in a film. Our cut was relying on music a lot and she made us rethink how we were using it and how we could bring in ambient sound to add emotional depth.

Editor: Khalid Shamis S.A.G.E.

Khalid Shamis studied film at the university of Middlesex, London, and graduated in 1997. Since then he has been trained as a director for the Viacom network and worked in the industry in the UK for over eight years.

Hailing from a Libyan father and South African mother, Khalid settled in South Africa in 2005 to make his debut multi award-winning documentary on the life death and legacy of Apartheid struggle hero, Imam Abdullah Haron. The Imam was Khalid's grandfather and the film is aptly titled *Imam and I*.

After lecturing for two and a half years in the Film school at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, specialising in screenwriting and post-production, Khalid is resolute that in order for this craft to be successful, the practice must be bridged at both academic and industry levels.

He now runs a small but successful Production company, tubafilms, in Cape Town. Khalid is actively Writing, Directing, Producing and Editing in the South African Film industry and is passionate about the current climate of filmmaking in SA having served on the boards of The South African Screen Federation (SASFED), the Independent Producers Organisation (IPO), the Documentary Filmmakers' Association (DFA) and the Producers' Alliance (TPO).

How would you describe the role of a documentary editor?

Judgmental storyteller. Crowd pleaser. Therapist. Diplomat

What were the challenges you encountered when editing the documentary?

The Sound of Masks came to me full of beautiful images and strong characters with great backing from IDFA Bertha, Hot Docs and the NFVF. The problem is that the story that was pitched and that got the funding is not in the footage. So the first big problem was to find and tell the story that is in the material. The path we chose I honk is much stronger than was initially conceptualists.

What suggestions did your mentor make to improve the edit?

Ronelle Loots had really strong suggestions to do with the use of sound in the film, an aspect that we hadn't focused so much on until then. It's really lifted the film.

When do you think it is important to have a mentor involved?

On these kind of independent long form films I think five or six weeks into the edit is a good moment to stop banging your heads against the walls of the suite and seek advice.

What value did the Rough Cut Lab process add to your project?

So much, so much. It was a great space to see the problems from someone else who has great story logic and also to have the ideas we are implementing into the film supported and agreed upon.

Mentor: Ronelle Loots S.A.G.E.

Ronelle Loots is an accomplished film and documentary editor, having worked on more than 35 feature films, a wide variety of documentaries, as well as a number of short films and drama series. Her documentary work includes Ochre and Water, Robert Mugabe...What Happened?, I, Afrikaner and The Boers at the End of the World. She is also known for features like U-Carmen eKhayelitsha, Promised Land, While you Weren't Looking, Four Corners, Forgiveness, Confessions of a Gambler and Die Wonderwerker, many of which won prestigious awards.

How would you describe the role of an editor?

The main role of the editor is to support the vision of the director. To this process they bring their own voice and skill.

What are the challenges documentary editing face?

Local films allow far too little time for editing. Editors should be included in pre shoot discussions whenever possible. Directors should be made far more aware of the

power and importance of quality sound when they are in the field. With today's technology this is not that difficult. Too often films are at a disadvantage in the international arena because of inattentiveness to this aspect. And of course producers generally allow far too little time for post-production.

Why do you think mentorship is important?

Bringing experienced editors to the process can help open up new avenues for exploration. Structural difficulties are often the main problem and experience can help solve and find shortcuts. Editors with some narrative experience are useful in this process.

How did you experience the Rough Cut Lab process?

I think the Lab could be extended to five days. This would allow time for the different projects to share more of their films, i.e. short viewings of "before and after" products and some feedback and discussion time.

Kind regards,

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